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REPORT

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1997

MARION COUNTY'S COMPLETE GUIDE TO LOCAL AND PRO SPORTS



Led by North Central quarterback Jason Lee (10), The North Central Panthers regained momentum in a 20-17 victory over the Ben Davis Giants. (Walt Thomas)

North Central upsets Ben Davis in thriller

By **BARATO BRITT**
Staff Writer

After an unlikely 1-2 start, the unranked Panthers of North Central regained confidence Friday with a heart-stopping 20-17 win over Metropolitan Interscholastic Conference rival Ben Davis.

The Panthers controlled the game throughout the first half taking advantage of poor play on both sides of the Giants' scheme. Led by a stingy defensive attack, and capitalizing on Giant missed opportunities, the Panthers came out swinging, scoring the game's first 17 points. North Central's offensive game was also clicking on all cylinders as senior quarterback Jason

Lee and a 47-yard run by Jon Younger powered two drives to the end zone.

"The whole key was the first touchdown drive," said Panthers' coach Al Harants. "I think it was a game plan thing and we were able to execute. Our defense is not real big, but they played hard."

By the second quarter, the Giants had given up a season-high 196 yards. Panthers' full back Shaun Whitlow led the rushing attack finishing with 103 yards on 25 carries. Lee also contributed to the ground onslaught with 91 rushing yards, including a 3-yard touchdown run.

"They have a tremendous quarterback, he was outstanding" said Ben Davis coach Dick Dullaghan. "And

with the addition of Whitlow, he made a difference. He's a good player."

The Giants began to show signs by the towards the end of the first half after 3-yard run by tail back Tony Shelby.

"We were flatter than a pancake in the first half. We took North Central lightly," said Dullaghan. "We did not play very well on defense today. They came out with a scheme that spread us out on the field."

Trailing 17-10 at halftime, the Giants defense made a crucial third quarter mistake failing to retrieve a North Central punt, shifting game momentum back to

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Legendary coach enters final season with Tigers

By COLLIE J. NICHOLSON
Bayou Sports Syndication

A notable prophet of doom much of his legendary career, Eddie Robinson kicked off his 57th campaign, his final orbit as coach of the Grambling Tigers, minus his professed pessimism.

To the contrary, the old coach, who could be a victim of his own flack, is downright optimistic about the 1997 season.

Even before the first calisthenic was taken, Robinson presented a strong case for his G-Men, asserting that Grambling will rebound after two disappointing seasons.

A miracle worker with 405 career wins—who influenced the game of college football as much as any coach in history—Robinson enters his final year with his usual intensity and resolve, but minus the talent and intangibles required for success against a foreboding schedule.

Robinson is first to admit in a firmly quieting voice that the 1997 season "is about respect. We have a sullied image to repair," he declared.

Robinson is determined to end a drought that produced only eight victories against 14 defeats over the past two seasons, the worst back-to-back record in his long and productive career.

Coaches and writers who cover Southwestern Athletic Conference teams shrug at any suggestion that Robinson can produce a winner this fall, despite his ability to adjust, to organize, to recognize talent and teach the nut and bolts of college football.

Robinson considers such evaluations meaningless. He feels that there are undisclosed factors in his favor, despite last year's traumatic 3-8 season. "Winning is about pride and desire," said the coach who enjoys a challenge and likes to prove people wrong.

He is confident that Grambling can win this year and considers all talk to the

contrary nonsense. He expects to field a contending team and is determined to devote time and energy to that task—motivating hungry players and focusing his offense and defense to turn out a winner.

"This team has unfulfilled potentials," Robinson said. "We played well enough, at times, last year to have ended the season with a better record. And the way we played convinced me that Grambling will have a contending team."

"This squad has a positive attitude and we're excited about what can happen," the coach said, anticipating a 180 degree turn. "Real progress will be measured on Saturday afternoons."

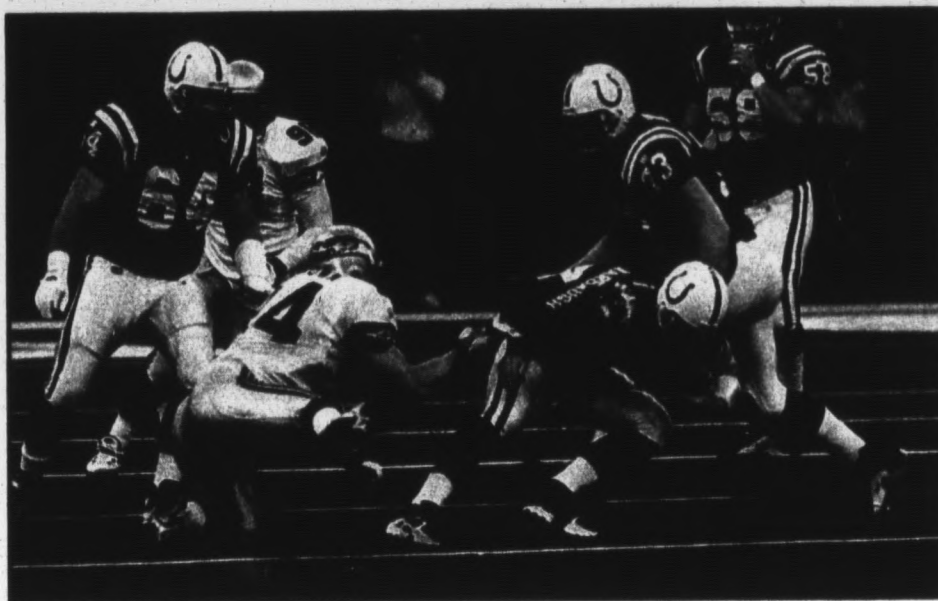
Robinson is pleased with the physical condition of freshmen, newcomers and veteran players.

"We are pretty excited. There is a lot of energy out there, plus an upward spiral of confidence. 'Everybody is working hard and everyone understands that winning will require total commitments,'" Robinson said.

For the time being, the adrenaline is flowing and the Tigers are imbued with a new spirit, eager to get the job done. The battle cry at Grambling is, "Win this year for the coach!"

More than 4,000 athletes have grown up in Robinson's Shadow, dating back to 1941. Finding his replacement will be a difficult task.

The G-Men will play their usual cross-country schedule enabling the national media to chronicle the end of a football era. Grambling games are scheduled for Giant Stadium, East Rutherford NJ; Rose Bowl Stadium, Pasadena, CA; the Super Bowl, Dallas, TX; Municipal Stadium, Jackson, MS; Independence Stadium, Shreveport, LA; and Skelly Field, Oklahoma City, OK. The Tigers began the season with a 44-20 loss to Alcorn State. They will continue Robinson's final season Sept. 20 at Langston.



In the Colts' first three games, Jim Harbaugh has taken a beating being sacked 16 times. (Walt Thomas)

No offense, more problems for Colts

By JAMES M. KEOUGH JR.
Sports Writer

Before the Indianapolis Colts offense can outscore opponents it must first outscore its own defense.

After registering only three points in the 31-3 embarrassing defeat at the hands of the Seattle Seahawks last weekend in the RCA Dome, the Colts are still the only team in the National Football League without an offensive touchdown.

The defense, however, did find the illusive end zone in the team's season opener against the Miami Dolphins. Elijah Alexander intercepted a Dan Marino pass and trotted 43 yards for the team's only touchdown.

With the brutal Bills on the horizon next weekend in Buffalo, the Colts are in desperate need of answers.

And they better find them in a hurry. Because when Bruce Smith, Bryce Paup and rest of the Bills defense come calling on Jim Harbaugh they usually don't take prisoners.

"I am totally embarrassed by this. I don't question the effort. I think everybody has worked hard and plays hard when they are out there. But we are playing like a bunch of mules out there.....Maybe I'm the biggest mule out there right now. I don't know," said Harbaugh, who completed 11 of 17 passes for 77 yards against the Seahawks.

"I'm trying to move the team and be productive and I haven't found a way to do that yet."

No kidding. The goal is not to pick on Harbaugh. But the performance of the offensive falls on shoulders of its' leaders.

For better or for worse. Infante, who has the reputation for being one of the League's innovative offensive minds, said his team's recent offensive ineptness is mind boggling.

"As bad as we did today I think it has to reflect back on this position, and I am willing to take that responsibility. For whatever reason, things are just not fall-

ing into place. When you go this many games without a touchdown you are not going to win many football games," said Infante. "I am in some unfamiliar territory right here.....This team hasn't been in a position like this before since I have been here anyway. I am in an unfamiliar surrounding at this time. I have never been anywhere we couldn't score any points and gotten beat as handily as we did the last couple of weeks. This is a bottom-line business. You have to win and we aren't getting that done right now."

In the first three games this season, Harbaugh has already been sacked 16 times for a total of 97 yards. Rookie linemen Adam Meadows and Tarik Glenn are being initiated into the NFL by fire.

But NFL could mean 'not for long' for Harbaugh if this porous group on the offensive line doesn't come together in a hurry.

Against the Seahawks, the Colts managed just 118 net yards. Marshall Faulk gained 58 yards on 17 carries while Harbaugh gained 30 yards on four carries. Meanwhile, the Seahawks amassed 423 net yards, which included 153 rushing and 270 passing. Veteran quarterback Warren Moon exploited the Colts secondary for most of the afternoon. He completed 24 of 38 pass attempts. Moon completed passes to seven different receivers.

Faulk, who has more to prove this year than just about anybody, said his team needs to remember to fight.

"You have to search yourself and search your team as a whole. My confidence isn't down. I'm not down on this team, or any particular person around me or down on myself. But you can't walk around here and say nothing is wrong. I mean.....we have to score points to win games around here," said Faulk, who has gained 175 yards rushing through the first three games combined. "Something has got to give."

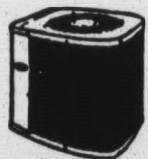
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CUSTOM MADE INDOOR WEATHER

West gives Pacers solid backup for Smits

By JAMES KEOUGH JR.
Sports Writer

After 14 seasons in the National Basketball Association, Mark West has seen just about everything.

He has played on winning teams, losing teams, up-and-coming teams and inevitable pretenders.

He has fought battles for the Dallas Mavericks, Milwaukee Bucks, Phoenix Suns, Detroit Pistons and Cleveland Cavaliers twice.

And now he is the newest member of the Indiana Pacers.

West, obtained via free agency earlier in the month, will help fill the void left by Erick Dampier at backup center. Dampier was sent packing to Golden State, along with Duane Ferrell, in the Chris Mullin trade.

The Pacers, in need of reliable backup minutes in the paint as well as leadership in the locker room, now possess one of the iron men of the NBA.

West has been one of the NBA's most reliable players. He has played in 1,004 games, including a stretch of over seven straight seasons in which he didn't miss a game (1988-94).

For most of his career, he has been a constant problem for the Pacers. His rough n' tough presence and tenacious style of play has always made him a worthy opponent. Dale Davis once referred to facing West as a "war."

According to Pacers president and general manager Donnie Walsh, it will be good to see West on his team for a change.

"I think he is perfect for our team. We get an experienced backup center with a defensive presence who is an extremely hard-working guy. I think he will fit in very well with our team," said Walsh.

Mental and physical toughness, strong work ethic and defensive tenacity.

Does this sound familiar?

Try the Indiana Pacers of the 1994-95 season.

Granted, Pacers head coach Larry Bird plans to run, but defense and rebounding win games. These traits are particularly important when your starting center is primarily a scorer.

Additionally, it is unlikely Dale Davis will play

48 minutes. While Antonio Davis is a capable scorer, as well as an adequate rebounder and defender, He does not appear to possess the same bravado as Dale Davis.

West, on the other hand, has seen the battles.

In fact, he is usually right in the middle of them.

"I think one of the main things I bring is experience. I think I can help be a leader. I've been in just about every situation there is to be in when it comes to playing professional basketball. I've been playing 14 years on teams that haven't been doing well or teams that were vying for a title or teams trying to break into the playoffs or traditional playoffs teams. I've witnessed just about every situation there is," said West. "There's always something new that could happen, but I think all of us veterans who have been through these wars know that if you don't concentrate, you don't focus on what you are doing then you could fall back."

Of all of the teams in the NBA, why the Pacers?

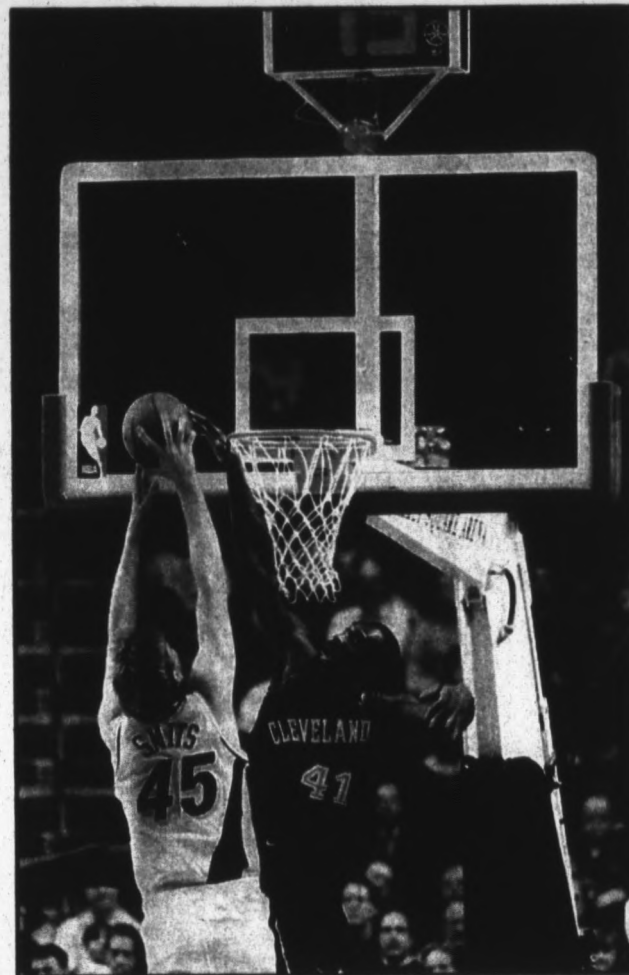
West, who was testing the free agent market after a one-year stint in Cleveland, received a call from an old business acquaintance.

"I'm very excited about becoming a Pacer. The road here was a little strange. I became a free agent after playing with Cleveland last year and I was waiting around to see what was going to happen in the free agent market. I got a call from a guy who used to represent me and now represents Chris Mullin (Bill Pollack) and he asked if I would be interested in playing in Indiana," said West. "I said sure, it would be great, that's where basketball is king. I got a call from Donnie Walsh and he asked what it would take for me to come here."

A second round draft pick of the Dallas Mavericks out of Old Dominion, West has blocked over 1,300 shots and has grabbed more than 5,100 rebounds in his career. He shot over 60 percent from the field for five consecutive seasons. He led the NBA in field goal percentage, shooting 62.5 percent, in 1989-90.

With Cleveland last season, he averaged 3.2 points and close to three rebounds per game in 70 appearances. He led Cleveland with 55 blocked shots.

In 1992-93, he started all 82 games at center and



New Pacer center Mark West will be blocking shots with Rik Smits in the upcoming season (Walt Thomas)

helped the Phoenix Suns qualify for the NBA Finals. They ultimately fell to the Chicago Bulls.

West and Bird are no strangers. West has his share of memories from Boston Garden.

"I never envisioned playing for Larry. Obviously, I've played against him and those great teams in Boston. I think it's going to be exciting and very interesting. He was a great player and has great knowledge of the game," said West. When asked if Bird had ever talked trash to him during a game? He added, "No, but one time he told me after a jump shot, 'Too late, big fella, it's already in the basket.'"

RCA

Continued from Page 1

the Panthers. The blunder eventually led to an NC field goal.

Panthers' running back Sultan Abdullah contributed to a strong rushing effort against the Giants in Friday's victory. (Walt Thomas)



The Giants compensated for the missed punt retrieval with a valiant drive orchestrated by lightning quick rushing from Jessie Avant and a breakaway touchdown pass from senior quarterback Mark Scott to Jesse Mayfield. A Damon Fine

field goal eventually brought the Giants to within three.

With 2:13 left and leading by three points, the Panthers broke the Giants' back with a Jon Younger interception.

"They were ready and they wanted us. They were hungry and we did stupid things out there," Dullaghan said.

Panthers so-captain Bobby Jackson said the slim win gives the team a much needed boost going into this week's home game against 1-3 Chatard.

"We really wanted to get this win. We play our hearts out there week in and week out," he said. "We got this one for the non believers who gave up on us. Our offense is starting to clicks so look out."

Ben Davis will need to shake off this loss for their next game at Lawrence North where the 2-2 Wildcats are coming off a convincing 34-8 victory over Warren Central.

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